

Gay marriage ban would get Clinton's approval

Announcement pleases neither side

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Clinton would sign legislation pending in Congress to outlaw gay marriages, his spokesman said Wednesday. In angry reaction, a gay rights group withdrew an invitation for a White House adviser to speak at a dinner next month.

Clinton is on record opposing same-sex marriages, and the White House already had said the president might sign the bill.

But press secretary Mike McCurry's firm statement that Clinton would sign the bill prompted the Human Rights Campaign to withdraw its invitation for White House adviser George Stephanopoulos to speak at a dinner in San Francisco on June 15. He already had accepted the invitation.

Religious conservatives lobbying for the measure responded that they are pleased Clinton will sign the bill but said it doesn't make up for his support of other gay issues.

"I must admit that I'm suspicious that his statement today is merely part of the now well-publicized effort to look like a conservative candidate for president," said Gary Bauer, president of the conservative Family Research Council.

The head of the Human Rights Campaign agreed that it was a tactical move.

"The signing of the bill is a capitulation to political religious extremist organizations," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the group that lobbies on gay and lesbian issues.

"We are saddened and very disappointed that the president needed to deal with this in a politically expedient manner."

The White House has complained that Republicans are using the issue as a political tool and a "wedge issue." But McCurry said Clinton would sign the legislation if it were to pass as currently written. Similar bills are before committees in the House and Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, who is retiring to focus full-time on his Republican presidential campaign, is a co-sponsor of the Senate bill, though he has not made gay marriages an issue on the campaign trail.

vide food stamps and school lunches. It also retains federal control of child protection and adoption programs as part of a welfare overhaul. It has more child-care money than even Clinton included in his budget plan. And legal immigrants who are not yet citizens would be eligible for cash welfare.

But Republicans will attach to the welfare bill a plan to give states control of Medicaid — something Clinton called “a poison pill” he would veto.

The new proposal provides either an opportunity to put Clinton in a position to veto welfare overhaul a third time, or acquiesce and sign a Medicaid proposal for which Republicans could take credit.

So the political tussle over this issue is likely to continue in Congress as well as on the campaign trail, even though the sides are not that far apart and many lawmakers insist they want a bipartisan bill.

In the past month, Clinton and Dole have each sought to portray themselves as the true reformer of a failed welfare system.

The new GOP plan — based on a bipartisan proposal from the National Governors Association — retains its focus on putting recipients to work in two years, imposing a five-year, lifetime limit on benefits and letting states design their own welfare programs.

The proposal is expected to save \$53 billion by 2002.

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agreements reduce the value of the land, lowering property and estate taxes for landowners.

Whatever the case, Macy said The Conservation Fund will have a better idea of whether the project will work in another three to four months, after formal talks with landowners.

The \$10 million grant was awarded by Great Outdoors Colorado, the agency set up to distribute much of state lottery proceeds. Wednesday's grant was part of \$30 million in so-called “Legacy Grants” — money doled out to six big-ticket preservation projects statewide.

Never before has Great Outdoors Colorado given out so much money at once, nor so much money for one project. Before Wednesday, the agency had awarded \$36 million to about 500 smaller projects.

The larger grants awarded Wednesday sprang from requests from communities and land-preservation groups for more money for big, regional projects. Higher-than-expected lottery revenues made the